

GARY LOCKE  
Governor



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March 9, 2004

Linda Lake, Chair  
Washington State Board of Health  
P.O. Box 47990  
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Chair Lake:

In November 2001 the State Board of Health (Board) asked the Department of Health (Department) to work with stakeholders on revisions to the state's onsite wastewater rules. I understand that the work of the Onsite Rule Development Committee is now complete. The Department will present its report, including proposed revisions to the rules, at the Board's March meeting, where you will consider whether to move forward with public review and comment.

I appreciate the tremendous amount of thought and hard work that has gone into this proposal to date. I am aware that numerous private individuals generously gave of their own time to work with the Department over these many months. I commend your efforts and theirs.

After reviewing the draft rule, however, I continue to be concerned about the level of protection afforded to Washington's unique marine waters and abundant shellfish resources. The proposed rule may not be strong enough to prevent harm to these resources from pollution caused by on-site septic systems. I believe this rule must strive for the highest possible level of environmental protection from failing or improperly maintained or operated septic systems. Doing so is critical to our state's endeavors to prevent water pollution and to protect shellfish beds and sensitive marine areas.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Board ask the Department to continue working with stakeholders who represent shoreline counties, the tribes, the shellfish industry, and appropriate agencies, to determine how the draft rules can be strengthened to give greater protection to our marine waters from failing or poorly maintained septic systems.

Again, thank you for all of your good work, and for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gary Locke".  
Gary Locke  
Governor